THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 519 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

Online Summer Session 1, **June 2- July 6**

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**Code of Conduct**

It is the student’s responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook ([www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu)). Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

**The Honor Statement**

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. ([Hilltopics](http://www.hilltopics.com)).

**University Civility Statement**

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: [http://civility.utk.edu/](http://civility.utk.edu/)

**Disability**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 100 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Dimensions of Diversity**

The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of
multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. "A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim" (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

**Course Description**

This is a required Foundation course. This course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for professional evidence-based practice with and on behalf of at-risk populations and to evaluate programs and practices. Students are introduced to the concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including basic research terminology, the scientific method in social work, the value of research in social work, research ethics and the social work value base, problem formulation and conceptualization, measurement, research designs, sampling, alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analytic techniques, and relevant information and computer technologies.

**Course Rationale**

Social workers must be critical consumers of research and possess the knowledge of research and its method in order to use research as a tool for competent and accountable evidence-based practice with and on behalf of at-risk populations. Toward that end, it is essential that social workers have the foundation knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to formulate questions about practice and policy, access and critically appraise the research literature available to answer such questions, and to prepare for more advanced methods used to evaluate programs and practices.

**Course Competencies**

By completion of this course, students are expected to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments and/or exams):

1. **Recognize and explain differences between an evidence-based helping professional and one guided by tradition, authority, dogma, and speculation**

   4.2, 4.4, 4.5 [Content: role, history, knowledge acquisition, and current status of research in social work; basic assumptions, concepts, foundations, and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these]
foundations; principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs.

2. Access relevant databases for research evidence to support or refute social work practice, program and policy decisions 4.3 [Content: evidence based practice, purpose of a literature review, sources of literature, and assess the quality of available literature]

3. Critically evaluate the methodological rigor of different kinds of qualitative and quantitative research and use this information to prioritize knowledge into a hierarchy of evidence from the most to the least rigorous 4.5, 4.3 [Content: research questions/hypotheses, practice problems (and transitions to research questions and hypotheses from these practice problems), principles and methods of sampling, measurement, design; descriptive and inferential statistics; and framework for evaluating research studies]

4. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research in reference to race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, family structure, relational status, national origin, age, and religion 4.1 [Content: principles and methods of sampling, measurement, and design; data interpretation; and culturally competent research]

5. Prepare, enter, and manipulate data using a spreadsheet or other software programs 4.3 [Content: Level of measurement, hypothesis testing, compute and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics; and selecting statistical tests];

6. Apply appropriate empirical techniques to evaluate process and outcomes with program evaluation and single client systems 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 [Content: case level research designs; univariate and bivariate statistics]

7. Articulate the core values and ethical standards of the social work profession (based on the NASW Code of Ethics and the International Federation of Social Work Code of Ethics) to research in settings with diverse constituencies across multiple systems 1.1 [Content: NASW code of ethics, historical overview of ethics in research, voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and cultural competent research];

8. Effectively communicate empirically-based knowledge (or lack thereof) 4.5, 4.3 [Content: writing a research report, APA style, research proposal components; framework for evaluation of research studies]

Course Requirements

This is an online class using technology to meet in an online class environment. Students are expected to complete ten modules online and assignments associated with each module. Class participation is expected and will be determined by your participation in online discussions. **No late submissions of your assignments will be accepted.** A student who wishes an extension of time for an assignment due to medical or personal emergency should consult the instructor in advance. However, an extension is not automatic and there may be a grade penalty. **Please note that technical difficulties are not an acceptable excuse for turning in an assignment late or submitting a quiz late.** All technical inquiries should be directed to the OIT helpdesk.

Evaluation Procedures and Grades The following scale will be used for the final course grade:

**A (95-100)** Outstanding/Superior. Student consistently exceed expectations.

**B+ (90-94)** Above Average. Student consistently meets, and occasionally exceeds, normal expectations for the course.

**B (85-89)** Average. Student consistently meets normal expectations for the course.

**C+ (80-84)** Below Average. There is unevenness in grasping course content. Student is inconsistent in meeting normal expectations for the course.

**C (70-79)** Poor. There is lack of understanding of course content. Student does not meet course expectations.

**F (69-Below)** Very Poor. Course expectations are not met. There is a lack of attendance or incomplete assignments.

Assignments: **Quizzes** (5 quizzes at 10% each) 50%

**Discussion Board Participation** (5 discussion boards at 4% each) 20%

**Article Critiques** (4 critiques at 5% each) 20%

**Ethics Certificate** 5%

**Survey** 5% = Total: 100%

I. **Quizzes:** Students will have a quiz each week that covers multiple modules in the class for a total of 5 quizzes in the course. All quizzes are located under the modules in "Course Documents". The quizzes are open book and open note, but you are not permitted to share answers or discuss the quiz with other students. Sharing answers or helping each other constitutes cheating and will result in disciplinary action. The quiz will be timed and you have 4 hours to complete the each quiz. Once you open a quiz, you must complete the quiz within 4 hours. Do not open the
quiz until you have reviewed the material for that module and you are ready to take the quiz. Each quiz will cover all readings, lecture materials, handouts, and websites for that particular module. If you fail to take the quiz during the designated time, you will receive a penalty of 5 points for a make-up quiz. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit your answers for the quiz.

**Quiz I will cover competencies: 1, 3, & 4**
**Quiz II will cover competencies 1, 4, 7, & 8**
**Quiz III will cover competencies 2, 3, 4, & 8**
**Quiz IV will cover competencies 4, 5, 6, & 8**
**Quiz V will cover competencies 1, 5, 6, & 8**

II. **Article Critiques:** Students are required to complete a series of 4 article critiques.

Students are expected to critically evaluate the methodological rigor of different kinds of qualitative and quantitative research articles. The articles cover the following topics: reliability and validity research; experimental research; program evaluation; survey research; qualitative research; and a variety of descriptive and inferential statistics. Below is a list of the articles required for the critiques and these are available on Blackboard along with example questions for how to critically analyze each article. **Due: June 31 at midnight**


**Article Critiques will cover competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8**

III. **Discussion Boards:** Students are expected to participate in a discussion board with their classmates for each module covered in this course in a timely fashion. All discussion boards are located under the tab in Course Documents. You are required to actively engaging in thoughtful discussions with your classmates. Your comment(s) can either be a new thread or a detailed response to other students’ comments. A simply "Yes, I agree" or "No, I don’t agree" is not an acceptable comment. Your grade for the discussion board will be dependent on the quality and
appropriateness of your comments. It is important to remember that this is a classroom environment. Therefore, your language and tone on the discussion board should reflect this environment. I want to encourage you to challenge and disagree with each other, but this must be done in a respectful manner. Points will be given out of 5. 0 is missing, 1 demonstrates inaccuracy or insufficient competency and no discussion among peers, 2 demonstrates partial coverage, limited or poor understanding of material and minimal discussion, 3 demonstrates basic understanding, average discussion and limited examples or application, 4 demonstrates effective application, examples beyond memorization or text content, as well as early and consistent engagement on the board, 5 demonstrates exceptional coverage, multiple examples or in-depth application and exceptional engagement with peers. The discussion boards will cover the following topics:

**Discussion Board One and Two: Module 1 Recognizing sources of knowledge in social work practice and using critical thinking to reason the social world, Evidence-Based practice Competencies 1 & 2 & 8**

**Discussion Board Three: Module 2: Ethics in social work research & Cultural relevance and competency of standardized measurement scales Competencies 1, 4, & 7**

**Discussion Board Four: Module 3: Searching relevant databases using the Boolean Method Module 5: Developing a research question and operationalizing the variables Competencies 2, 3, & 6**

**Discussion Board Five: Module 4: Developing and critiquing surveys for research via Survey Monkey and demonstrating knowledge of levels of measurement for statistical analyses Competencies 5, 6, & 8**

**IV. Ethics Certificate:** In order to clearly articulate the core values and ethical standards of the social work profession in order to conduct research in settings with diverse constituencies across multiple systems, students are expected to take the National Cancer Institute web-based course about the rights and welfare of human participants in research. This two-hour tutorial is designed for those involved in conducting research involving human participants. It satisfies the NIH human subjects training requirement for obtaining Federal Funds. Upon successful completion, you will be given a certificate of completion Go to link: [http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php](http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php) complete training and cut your certification and paste this into the designated assignment area in Blackboard. **Due June 18th by midnight Competencies 1, 7, & 4**

**V. Survey Assignment:** This assignment will be related to Discussion Board Five that covers Module 4. Each student will have the opportunity to create his/her own survey using Survey Monkey. Students will create an online survey about an area of interest. This is a free service, but it is limited to only 10 questions and will be done through Survey Monkey. Open the Discussion Board Tab in Blackboard and click the
link. Go to Survey Monkey [http://www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com/) create your survey and then post the link to your survey to Discussion Board. You must take a minimum of three surveys from other classmates to receive full credit. You will then post about the surveys you took, discuss what you learned, and how they might be improved upon. Students will be expected to engage practical and analytical conversation and discuss strengths and weaknesses of surveys via discussion board. Students will receive points for the discussion board as well as individual points for the surveys created based on the following criteria: "**Discussion Board Opens June 25 8am and closes June 30th at midnight**

**Criteria for survey is as follows:**

- Survey has name or creative title related to subject content
- Minimum of 10 questions related to topic of interest
- **All four levels of measurement** must be represented
- Contains one open-ended question
- Contains one closed or forced response question
- Contains one scale question, Likert or Semantic differential
- Questions build on each other so that there is a clear flow relating to overall topic

**Competencies 2, 3, & 6**

**Course Schedule:** **Week One: June 2-June 11th**

**Module One:** Rubin and Babbie: Chapter 1 Introduction to Social Research; Chapter 2 Evidence-Based Practice, Chapter 3; Introduction to Paradigms Watch Video; Rebirthing, Death of Candace Newmaker and Rubin and Babbie Chapter 4 pages 78-83

**Readings Available on Blackboard:**


Moyzakitis, W. (2004). Exploring women's descriptions of distress and/or trauma in childbirth from a feminist perspective. *Evidence Based Midwifery Online*

**Discussion Board One / Introductions and Reviewing Beliefs About Knowledge: Opens June 2 8am Closes June 5th at Midnight**

**Quiz One:** Module One: Opens June 2 at 8am closes June 11th at Midnight

**Discussion Board Two / Response to Rebirthing: Opens June 5th 8am closes June 11th midnight**

**Week Two: June 12-June 18**
Module Two: Ethics in Human research Rubin and Babbie: Chapter 5; Research Ethics, IRB, Consent Forms, Read and discuss ethics case studies from History: Willowbrook, Milgram & Tuskegee; Watch documentary footage on Willowbrook; Review Willowbrook consent form; Watch documentary, Guatemala research, Dateline: Autism research retracted Chapter 6; Culturally Competent Research


Discussion Board Three: Opens June 12th 8am closes June 18th at Midnight
Ethics Certificate Due: June 18th by midnight
Quiz Two: Module Two: Opens June 12 at 8am closes June 18th at Midnight

Week Three: June 19-25
Module Three: Rubin and Babbie: Chapter 7 Reviewing Literature & Developing Research Questions, Types of research questions: Exploratory, Explanatory, Descriptive, Evaluative (Review PDF Homelessness; Rubin and Babbie: AND Chapters 8 pages 181-196, Chapter 9 pages 217-225, Chapters 10 & 16 Survey Research

Quiz Three on Module Three: Opens June 19 8am closes June 25th midnight
Discussion Board Four: Evidence Search and Report your Findings: Opens June 19th 8am closes June 25 at midnight

Week Four: June 25th-June 30
Module Four: Rubin and Babbie: Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 15 Sampling Probability and Non-Probability, Pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, and experimental research designs, & Single System Designs

Discussion Board Five: Survey Monkey Opens June 25 8am and closes June 30th at midnight
Quiz Four over Module Four: Opens June 25 at 8am and closes June 30th at midnight

Partial Week Five June 31 -July 4th
Module Five: Rubin and Babbie: Chapters 18, 19, & 21 Qualitative Research, Methods and Analysis, Data Collection and Coding, Statistical Applications including
Descriptive Statistics, Measures of Variability, Central Tendency, and Selecting the appropriate statistical test for level of data and grouping variables.

Quiz Five opens June 25th and closes July 1 at midnight

***Article Critiques Due: June 31st Midnight

*** All additional readings listed above located within each module for student download